



St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Palm/Passion Sunday – April 13, 2025  
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Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister  
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!  
Know that you are welcome here just as you are.*

*If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time worshipping at St. John, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.*

*Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an \* and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**. All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.*

*During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

*At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Online gifts may be made using the QR code below:*



*You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. **Guest information cards** and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

*As Lutherans, we believe Christ is truly present in the elements of the Lord's Supper. At the time of **Holy Communion**, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.*

*If you need a **restroom**, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.*

*A **playroom** is available downstairs for children who need a break from the worship service.*

*This room is by the elevator on the lower level. An adult must remain with the child. Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by the elevator.*

## **PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*All are invited to gather outside the door in the back of the sanctuary, as able, for the Blessing of Palms and the reading of the Processional Gospel.*

### **\*BLESSING OF THE PALMS**

Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

**Hosanna in the Highest!**

### **\*PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Luke 19:28-40**

*All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.*

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus] went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup> They said, “The Lord needs it.” <sup>35</sup> Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying,

**“Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!”**

<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” <sup>40</sup> He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

God of our salvation, mercifully assist us to joyfully enter the contemplation of the mighty acts by which you have given us life everlasting, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! **Hosanna in the highest!**

*During the singing of the Processional Hymn, all follow the cross into the church, as we remember and celebrate our Lord's entry into Jerusalem.*

**\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN *All Glory Laud and Honor* (ELW 344)**

*Refrain*



All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to you, re - deem - er, king,



to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.



- 1 You are the king of Is - rael and Da - vid's roy - al Son,
- 2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels are prais - ing you on high;
- 3 The mul - ti - tude of pil - grims with palms be - fore you went;
- 4 To you, be - fore your pas - sion, they sang their hymns of praise.
- 5 Their prais - es you ac - cept - ed; ac - cept the prayers we bring,



*Refrain*

now in the Lord's name com - ing, our King and Bless - ed One.  
cre - a - tion and all mor - tals in cho - rus make re - ply.  
our praise and prayer and an - thems be - fore you we pre - sent.  
To you, now high ex - alt - ed, our mel - o - dy we raise.  
great au - thor of all good - ness, O good and gra - cious King.

**REFLECTION**

**PRAYERS**

Let us pray, Jesus, we have heard you say, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me."

**Lord, help us to take up our cross and follow you.**

You entered Jerusalem and we cried

**Hosanna, Hosanna. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"**

We cry out for you to save us as you promised, remembering those we hold in our hearts, especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Ellen, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, those on our prayer list, and ourselves.

**Lord, remember us when you come into your kingdom.**

## OFFERING

As the crowds offered their cloaks in thanks and praise for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, let us offer with joy what God has first given us, our selves, our time, and our possessions.

## OFFERTORY HYMN *Jesus is a Rock in a Weary Land* (ELW 333)

*Please stand at the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse.*

*Refrain - All*



Je - sus is a rock in a wea - ry land, a wea - ry land, a  
wea - ry land; my Je - sus is a rock in a  
wea - ry land, a shel - ter in the time of storm.

*Leader or All*

1	No	one	can	do	like	Je - sus,	not	a
2	When	Je - sus	was	on	earth, . . . . .	the . .		
3	Yon - der	comes	my	Sav - ior,		him . .		



mum - bling word he said; he went walk - ing down to Laz -  
flesh was ver - y weak; . . he took a towel and gird -  
whom I love so well; . . he has the palm of vic -

*Refrain*




- a - rus' grave, and he raised him from the dead.  
ed him - self and he washed his dis - ci - ples' feet.  
- to - ry and the keys of death and hell.

## \*OFFERTORY PRAYER

We give thanks for all that God has done, is doing, and will do.

**May God use us and what we gather in feeding the world with God's love.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Glo - ry and praise to you, O Lord Je - sus Christ.

## **GOSPEL READING: Luke 22:14 – 23:56**

*Please be seated for the gospel reading. All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.  
(Luke 22:14-30)*

When the hour came, [Jesus] took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup> for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup> for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup> Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup> And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup> But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” <sup>23</sup> Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

<sup>24</sup> A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. <sup>25</sup> But he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

<sup>28</sup> “You are those who have stood by me in my trials; <sup>29</sup> and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>31</sup> “Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” <sup>33</sup> And he said to him, “**Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!**” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.”

## **REFLECTION**

### **\*APOSTLES’ CREED**

Gathered as one in the body of Christ in God’s abundant mercy, let us confess our faith:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **\*THE PREPARING OF THE MEAL**

### **\*GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

**Your love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up.**

Even as your Son gathered with his friends for one more meal, as he prepared to give the full measure of his devotion and love to this broken world, just before his own friend betrayed him, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

God of Life, in a world that loves scarcity, your abundance is shocking.  
In a world that knows fear, your love is compelling.  
In a world that knows anxiety, your peace is captivating.  
**We long for these things.**

So today we ask you:

When compassion fatigue rears her head, **be with us.**

When stress makes it hard to breathe, **be with us.**

When self-doubt pushes in close, **be with us.**

When exhaustion becomes our constant or when loneliness becomes our norm, **be with us.**

Be with us and show us the way to the life you long for us.

**Show us a life of expansive faith. Show us a life that is abundant in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. Breathe new life into us.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen**

### **\*WELCOME TO THE TABLE**

We come to this sacramental meal in faith, trusting in God's abiding presence and abundant forgiveness. We especially celebrate with Cate today as she comes to this table of grace. May God give her a joyful heart, open hands, and courageous faith to come to the table as her actual self. We believe that Jesus is fully present in this meal—in, with, and under the bread and wine—so that we cannot receive it without receiving the gifts of Jesus, too. The logistics are a mystery and God's to tend. We simply trust that where Jesus shows up, there is forgiveness, salvation and everlasting life.

### **\*INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*Cate and her family will receive communion first, once they have communed, the rest of the congregation will be invited forward.*

At this table there is abundance. You are invited to this meal of grace. Every one of us – with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions – we are invited to God's table. Now come. Not because you must, but because you can. Come. You are invited. God's love is for you!

*Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come and experience the real presence of Christ in the elements. Those who do not receive the elements are invited to come forward for a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought to those who are unable to come forward.*



## COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
 world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you  
 take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy  
 on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
 sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

### COMMUNION HYMN *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say* (ELW 611)

1 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Come un - to me and rest;  
 2 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Be - hold, I free - ly give  
 3 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "I am this dark world's light;  
 lay down, O wea - ry one, lay down your head up - on my breast."  
 the liv - ing wa - ter, thirst - y one; stoop down and drink and live."  
 look un - to me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."  
 I came to Je - sus as I was, so wea - ry, worn, and sad;  
 I came to Je - sus, and I drank of that life - giv - ing stream;  
 I looked to Je - sus, and I found in him my star, my sun;  
 I found in him a rest - ing - place, and he has made me glad.  
 my thirst was quenched, my soul re - vived, and now I live in him.  
 and in that light of life I'll walk till trav - 'ling days are done.

*(Luke 22:35-53)*

[Jesus] said to [his disciples], “When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “No, not a thing.”<sup>36</sup> He said to them, “But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one.”<sup>37</sup> For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, ‘And he was counted among the lawless’; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.”<sup>38</sup> They said, “Lord, look, here are two swords.” He replied, “It is enough.”

<sup>39</sup> He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> When he reached the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” <sup>41</sup> Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, <sup>42</sup> “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” <sup>43</sup> [Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. <sup>44</sup> In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.] <sup>45</sup> When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”

<sup>47</sup> While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; <sup>48</sup> but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” <sup>49</sup> When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” <sup>50</sup> Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. <sup>51</sup> But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? <sup>53</sup> When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!”

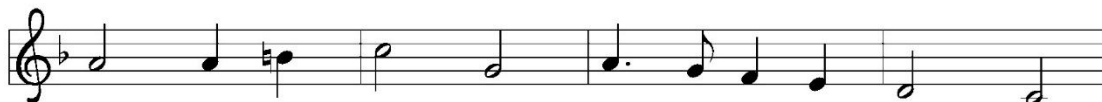
## **REFLECTION**

# HYMN *There in God's Garden* (ELW 342)

Verses 1,2,4



1 There in God's gar - den stands the Tree of Wis - dom,  
2 Its name is Je - sus, name that says, "Our Sav - ior!"  
4 See how its branch - es reach to us in wel - come;



whose leaves hold forth the heal - ing of the na - tions:  
There on its branch - es see the scars of suf - f'ring;  
hear what the Voice says, "Come to me, ye wea - ry!



Tree of all knowl - edge, Tree of all com -  
see there the ten - drils of our hu - man  
Give me your sick - ness, give me all your



pas - sion, Tree of all beau - ty.  
self - hood feed on its life - blood.  
sor - row, I will give bless - ing."

(Luke 22:54 – 22:62)

*All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.*

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. <sup>55</sup> When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. <sup>56</sup> Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him." <sup>57</sup> But he denied it, saying, "**Woman, I do not know him.**" <sup>58</sup> A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "**Man, I am not!**" <sup>59</sup> Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." <sup>60</sup> But Peter said, "**Man, I do not know what you are talking about!**" At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. <sup>61</sup> The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." <sup>62</sup> And he went out and wept bitterly.

## **REFLECTION**

## **CONFESSION**

We come to confession not to wallow in our own guilt. There is life to be gained here. And so trusting in God's tireless mercy, let us confess our sins before God and before one another, opening ourselves to God's healing love:

**Holy God, we confess: we do not turn to you fully. We share with you only the pieces of our lives that are convenient. We forget that we are called, invited, and loved with all that we are –our mess, our beauty, our faith, and our doubt. Forgive us. Teach us a new way. Teach us your way. Teach us to love as you love. Give us hearts that long to turn fully to you, to confidently follow you, to boldly declare your name above all names. Amen.**

(Luke 22:63 – 23:25)

*All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.*

<sup>63</sup> Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; <sup>64</sup> they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” <sup>65</sup> They kept heaping many other insults on him.

<sup>66</sup> When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. <sup>67</sup> They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us.” He replied, “If I tell you, you will not believe; <sup>68</sup> and if I question you, you will not answer. <sup>69</sup> But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” <sup>70</sup> All of them asked, “Are you, then, the Son of God?” He said to them, “You say that I am.” <sup>71</sup> Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!”<sup>23</sup>:

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. <sup>2</sup> They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.” <sup>3</sup> Then Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He answered, “You say so.” <sup>4</sup> Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.” <sup>5</sup> But they were insistent and said, “**He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.**”

<sup>6</sup> When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup> And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. <sup>8</sup> When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. <sup>9</sup> He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. <sup>11</sup> Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate. <sup>12</sup> That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.

<sup>13</sup> Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, <sup>14</sup> and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. <sup>15</sup> Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. <sup>16</sup> I will therefore have him flogged and release him.”

<sup>18</sup> Then they all shouted out together, “**Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!**” <sup>19</sup> (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) <sup>20</sup> Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; <sup>21</sup> but they kept shouting, “**Crucify, crucify him!**” <sup>22</sup> A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” <sup>23</sup> But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. <sup>24</sup> So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. <sup>25</sup> He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

## REFLECTION

(Luke 23:26-43)

*All are invited to read aloud the words in **bold**.*

<sup>26</sup> As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. <sup>27</sup> A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. <sup>28</sup> But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ <sup>30</sup> Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ <sup>31</sup> For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

<sup>32</sup> Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. <sup>33</sup> When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup> [Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. <sup>35</sup> And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, <sup>37</sup> and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” <sup>38</sup> There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” <sup>40</sup> But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? <sup>41</sup> And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” <sup>42</sup> Then he said, “**Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.**” <sup>43</sup> He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

## FORGIVENESS

Friends, even in this moment, even in the middle of hurt, betrayal, and death, God sees you. God hears you. And God loves you. No matter how many times we mess up, no matter how lost we feel, God’s grace is full to the brim. It finds us where we are, covers us in mercy and promises forgiveness. There is no waiting. Forgiveness comes to us today, in this moment. We hear the words of Jesus to the man on the cross beside him: “Truly I tell you, *today* you will be with me in Paradise.”

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, you are forgiven and freed today.

(Luke 23:44-49)

<sup>44</sup> It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, <sup>45</sup> while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup> Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. <sup>47</sup> When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."

<sup>48</sup> And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. <sup>49</sup> But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

*Silence for Reflection*

### **MUSICAL REFLECTION**

Via Dolorosa, Words and Music by Billy Sprague and Niles Borop. Arr. by Ken Barker

*Down the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem that day, the soldiers tried to clear the narrow street; but the crowd pressed in to see the man condemned to die on Calvary. Down the Via Dolorosa, called, "The Way of Suffering," like a lamb, came the Messiah, Christ the King, and He chose to walk that road out of His love for you and me, down the Via Dolorosa all the way to Calvary.*

*He was bleeding from a beating there were stripes upon His back, and He wore a crown of thorns upon His head; and He bore with every step the scorn of those who cried out for His death. Down the Via Dolorosa, called, "The Way of Suffering," Like a lamb, came the Messiah, Christ the King, and He chose to walk that road out of His love for you and me, down the Via Dolorosa all the way to Calvary.*

*The blood that would cleanse the souls of all men made its way thru the heart of Jerusalem! Down the Via Dolorosa, called, "The Way of Suffering," like a lamb, came the Messiah, Christ the King, and He chose to walk that road out of His love for you and me. Down the Via Dolorosa, all the way to Calvary.*

<sup>50</sup> Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, <sup>51</sup> had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup> This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>53</sup> Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. <sup>54</sup> It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. <sup>55</sup> The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. <sup>56</sup> Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

*Silence for Reflection*

Let us pray: We cried out for you to save us as you promised  
**Lord remember us when you come into your kingdom.**

You stood before Pilate, your life condemned, your word rejected, your innocence ignored:  
**Keep us from rejecting your word of truth and salvation.**

Stripped and jeered, you endured humiliation without complaint.  
**Humble us in our work and daily lives.**

Nailed to the cross, you took your place among the condemned.  
**Take your place beside us sinners, and remember us according to your mercy and love.**

When your sacrifice was complete, you handed your life to the Father,  
and he did not forsake you.

**Keep us close to your cross, now and at the hour of our death.**

**\*BLESSING**

May God our tender parent, God the crucified one, and God the reconciling Spirit fill you with courage, fill you with peace, and fill you to the brim with grace and blessing. **Amen.**

**\*SENDING SONG *Were You There* (ELW 353)**



- 1 Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
- 2 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
- 3 Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
- 4 Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?
- 5 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?



- Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?  
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?  
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?  
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

*Refrain*



Oh, some-times it caus-es me to trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.



- Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?  
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?  
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?  
Were you there when the sun re - fused to shine?  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?



**\*SENDING PRAYER**

O God of mercy and might, in the mystery of the passion of your Son you offer your infinite life to the world.

Faithful friends and loving women took loving care of Jesus' lifeless body.

**Anoint us with grace and wrap us in your arms of love.**

In the tomb you were laid, but from the tomb you arose.

**Gather us around the cross of Christ, and preserve us until the resurrection**

**\*SENDING READING Philippians 2:5-11**

Hear the word of the Lord:

<sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God

as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—

even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name

that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve in love.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

**The Altar Flowers are given by Jeff and Deb Martin  
in celebration of Palm / Passion Sunday.**

**Assisting in worship today:**

**Assisting Minister: Denise H**

**Acolyte: Anna K**

**Offering: Lydia M and Eva K**

**Attendance last week: 52 + 3 zoom**

**Notes for the day's texts:**

The movement of this day—from shouts of praise to words of denial and cries for crucifixion—mirrors the path of discipleship. The lives of Jesus' followers hang in the balance between faithfulness and betrayal. For Peter, the act of denial is subtle and insidious. He claims not to know Jesus; he claims to have no place as his disciple. On the surface it is seemingly harmless. It happens, and then is over in a moment. In reality, the harm is deep and lasting. Subtle but harmful denial happens in a split second as disciples compromise faith for the sake of self-protection—as they're too embarrassed to give thanks; as someone knows how to help but fails to do so because it's inconvenient; as resources are hoarded. While Peter withholds everything for his own sake, Jesus, for the sake of others, withholds nothing. As disciples fail to claim their place with Jesus, Jesus' embrace claims them. From the cross, Jesus offers mercy wide enough to claim even those who do not know what they do.

**Today's Music**

*All Glory Laud and Honor.* Text: Theodulph of Orleans, c. 760–821; tr. John Mason Neale, alt., Music: Melchior Teschner. Public Domain.  
*There in God's Garden.* Text: Király Imre von Pécselyi, c. 1590–c. 1641; tr. Erik Routley, 1917–1982, Music: K. Lee Scott, b. 1950. Hinshaw Music, Inc. / MorningStar Music Publishers.  
*Jesus is a Rock in a Weary Land.* Text: African American spiritual, Music: African American spiritual. Public Domain / Wyatt Tee Walker.  
*I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say.* Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889, Music: English folk tune. Public Domain / Augsburg Fortress.  
*Were You There.* Text: African American spiritual, Music: African American spiritual. Public Domain / Augsburg Fortress.  
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**We continue our worship with the services of Holy Week:**

**Maundy Thursday: April 17<sup>th</sup>**

*Service of Absolution, Commitment to Ministry, and Preparation, 7:00 pm*

**Good Friday: April 18<sup>th</sup>**

*Kids Cross Walk, 3:00-5:00 pm*

*Stations of the Cross Tableaux, 5:30-6:15 pm*

*Seven Last Words Tenebrae Service, 7:00-7:45 pm*

**Easter Vigil: April 19<sup>th</sup>**

*Service of Storytelling and Communion, 7:00 pm*

**Easter Sunday: April 20<sup>th</sup>**

*Sunrise Service in the Park, 6:30 am*

*Festal Worship with Holy Communion, 9:00 am*